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LETTER DATED 19 DECEMBER 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the Special Announcement on a Nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, which was made on 18 December 1991 by His Excellency Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Chang Hee ROE
Ambassador

Annex

Special Announcement on a Nuclear-free Korean Peninsula

Last week, South and North Korea agreed on a detailed accord in an effort to end the half-century-old cold war on the Korean peninsula and to open a new era of peace.

The accord, which was signed at the conclusion of the fifth South-North high-level talks, consists of important measures that are necessary to end national division and rivalry on the basis of mutual trust, to build a structure of peace on our land and to promote national reconciliation and common prosperity through exchanges and cooperation.

The Republic of Korea fully supports this accord, for we believe that the development of an inter-Korean relationship based on peaceful coexistence and common prosperity is an essential step towards the goal of national unification.

Together with the parallel entry of South and North Korea into the United Nations in September, the signing of the South-North Korean accord last week is an epic milepost on our road to the resolution of the Korean question and the attainment of national unity.

South and North Korea should now march together towards peace and unification.

The tasks and courses of action which lie ahead of the two Koreas are clear.

It is now incumbent on the two Korean Governments to implement faithfully the contents of the accord step by step so that national reconciliation, peace and common prosperity, which are aspirations shared by all Koreans, may be soon realized.

The Republic of Korea pledges to do its utmost in transforming the relationship with the North from one of rivalry to partnership, exchanges and cooperation. In addition, we will seek a speedy resolution of political and military issues between South and North Korea.

The cold war brought upon our nation untold sorrows and tragedies. The sacrifices and tribulations this nation suffered from division, war and rivalry have been truly enormous and unbearable.

Now, the two Koreas have produced a charter of peace that will end a dark period in their history and bring forth a new era of reconciliation and cooperation. I firmly believe that this new charter will mark a momentous turning-point on the road to building a new nation in which 70 million Koreans together will forge a glorious future.

Before we proceed with the implementation of the widely supported inter-Korean accord, however, there is an important issue that must be resolved at the earliest possible date. It is the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

On 8 November, I enunciated the non-nuclear Korean peninsula peace initiative, noting that the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea was an extremely dangerous venture which posed serious threats not only to the peace and survival of the Korean people, but also to regional and global stability.

It was for these reasons that I made a public pledge specifically declaring that South Korea would not manufacture, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons and that we would also renounce the right to build nuclear reprocessing facilities, which could very well have been justified on grounds of economic necessity.

In order to remove any obstacles to nuclear inspections of North Korea, my Government, in consultation with the United States Government, has proposed during the recent high-level talks to conduct simultaneous nuclear inspections of facilities in the South, including United States military bases in South Korea.

To submit military bases of a nuclear super-Power to international inspection is a truly exceptional precedent, but we have reached this decision for the sole purpose of a peaceful and smooth resolution of the Korean peninsula nuclear issue.

It is gratifying to note that last week at the high-level talks, South and North Korea jointly recognized that there should be no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula. On this common ground, I sincerely hope that a definitive agreement on nuclear issues will emerge from the Panmunjom working-level conference later this month.

So that we may come to an early resolution of the nuclear issue, I take this opportunity to make one thing emphatically and unequivocally clear to you, my fellow Koreans, as well as to North Korea and the world at large.

As I speak, there do not exist any nuclear weapons whatsoever, anywhere in the Republic of Korea.

Clearly, then, the non-nuclear policy enunciated in my 8 November declaration has now been fulfilled in so far as the Republic of Korea is concerned.

I would like to emphasize the following to the North Korean authorities.

Since the Republic of Korea is now completely nuclear-free and since we have agreed to the simultaneous nuclear inspections proposal, there is no reason or excuse for North Korea to develop nuclear weapons or refuse nuclear inspection.

North Korea must forthwith conclude and ratify a nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, shut down all nuclear reprocessing and enrichment facilities, and submit unconditionally to international inspection.

It is now North Korea's responsibility to demonstrate to the Korean people and the world that a genuine peace is indeed emerging on the Korean peninsula, by resolving the nuclear issue on the basis of the letter and spirit of the South-North accord.

Obviously, we cannot successfully build peace and national reconciliation without first resolving the nuclear question. For this reason, the entire international community is currently searching for ways to deter North Korea's development of nuclear weapons, having recognized them to be a significant threat to the peace of this region and potentially a grave danger in fuelling the proliferation of nuclear weapons globally.

I believe that the North Korean authorities are well aware of the central issues. I would expect that North Korea will bring to the forthcoming Panmunjom conference measures that will satisfy the legitimate demands of the Korean people and the international community.

North Korea must immediately abandon the development of nuclear weapons. It is an imperative duty that cannot and should not be delayed.

I sincerely hope that an agreement guaranteeing a nuclear-free Korean peninsula will emerge by the end of this month so that, with the new year, the two Koreas will usher in a new era of reconciliation, cooperation, peace and common prosperity.